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United States President Barack Obama. (FP)

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BETHESDA, Md. (AP) – Acid reflux is responsible for the sore throat President Barack Obama has complained about for the past couple of weeks, the White House said today, shortly after the president returned from undergoing diagnostic tests at a nearby military hospital.

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Obama's motorcade made the approximately half-hour crawl in rainy weather to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre in Bethesda, Maryland, where a CT scan was performed and was normal.

Obama, 53, was at the facility for about a half hour before returning to the White House.





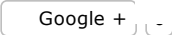
The CT scan followed a morning fibre optic exam performed on Obama at the White House by an ear, nose and throat specialist from Fort Belvoir Medical Centre in Northern Virginia and supervised Dr Ronny L. Jackson, Obama's physician and director of the White House Medical Unit.

Jackson said in a statement that the fibre optic exam revealed "soft tissue swelling" in the back of Obama's throat. Jackson said he and the specialist, who was not identified, determined that "further evaluation with a routine CT scan was prudent".

The CT scan was normal, Jackson said.

"The president's symptoms are consistent with soft tissue inflammation related to acid reflux and will be treated accordingly," he said, without elaborating on exactly how Obama's condition would be treated.

Acid reflux is caused when the contents of the stomach flow back up the oesophagus, causing heartburn and other symptoms. Treatments include avoiding certain foods and using over-the-counter or prescription medications, including antacids.

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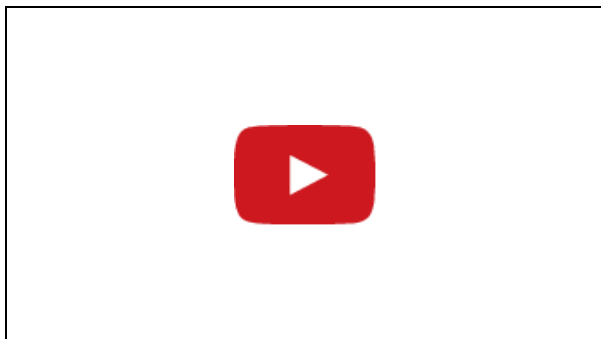
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ESTWICK FED UP
Minister gives PM ultimatum

by BANKA PRICE

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE Dr David Estwick has written Prime Minister Freundel Stuart and given him an ultimatum.

His warning action taken by Stuart or his, Estwick, may not continue to serve in a Cabinet where its instructions are not carried out with "fidelity".

Estwick's demand is contained in a seven-page letter to Stuart dated November 17 which relates his anger on issues surrounding the Barbados Case Industry Restructuring Project (BCIRP).

Estwick said: "I believe in Cabinet Government... I have written to you twice regarding matters of this nature and I want to give you every opportunity to define the authority of the Cabinet. I have no intention to continue to serve in a Cabinet where its instructions... are not carried out with fidelity. I can assure you that this is the last time I will raise this matter with you."

In the letter which was copied to other members of Cabinet -- a copy of which was sent by the SUNDAY SUN -- Estwick lamented that he had not been given prior notice that Stuart wanted an update on BCIRP at a Cabinet meeting four days earlier.

As a result, Estwick said he was unable to have brought the necessary due "to refute several fundamental statements told to the Cabinet...".

The 16 Philip West representative complained about issues related to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between original backers Inter-agriculture Partnership (IAP) and Marubeni Corporation of Japan. He pointed to the "immediacy" of the presentation given that the latter had withdrawn its involvement in the case project five months earlier.

He stressed that there was no such MOU, but rather a Cabinet Paper presenting the financing terms sheet from National Standard Finance, an American investment firm, to fund the BCIRP.

Stating that the National Standard Finance offer was one of foreign direct investment as the company was willing to invest its own money in the local sugar industry, Estwick expressed regret that there had been no action to date on this important Cabinet Paper.

To clear up the "misconception" as well as to protect the integrity of his ministry, the Barbados Agricultural Management Company and Barbados Case Industry Corporation, Estwick chronologically outlined the major aspects relating to the project and also attached documentary evidence to support his position.

He declared that "what is before the Ministry of Finance is not a debt offer; it is equity investment" which he needed at the time.

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MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE Dr David Estwick, pm

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Karen Grant leads the troops
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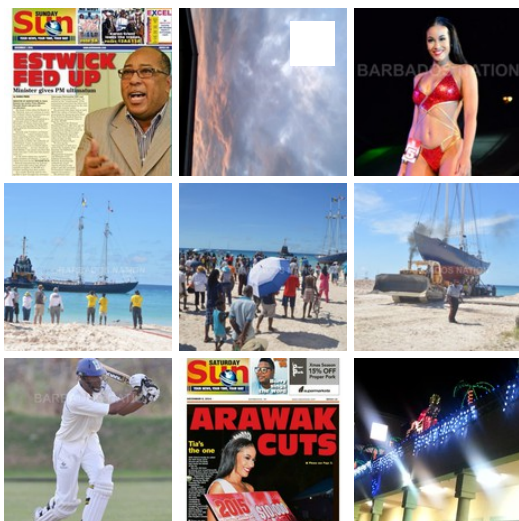
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